

## PRESS-REGISTER

### Minority business owners pitch to area bankers

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Six minority business owners pitched their expansion plans to more than a dozen lenders during the first-ever Gulf Coast Access to Capital Summit, held Monday on the campus of the University of South Alabama.

Attendance six presenters, plus another 25 walk-ins who talked informally with lenders was about what organizers had hoped for, said Darrell Randle, vice president of small business development for the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce.

"We wanted an intimate and smaller, more manageable crowd," Randle said.

The enthusiasm of those who came to the daylong event, which also consisted of one-on-one meetings between entrepreneurs and lenders, was strong.

"I'm pumped for Mobile," said Ronald Langston, national director of the Minority Business Development Agency. "I think the potential here is huge."

Comparing the summit to "speed-dating," Langston said the intimate sessions allowed bankers to really get to know their potential clients.

If the event was speed-dating, Ida Buish, owner of Mobile-based Mobile Aeroteam Inc., was belle of the ball. Buish said that nearly every banker wanted to talk to her about her plan to add a \$55,000 building and three to four employees. Mobile Aeroteam manufactures small airplane parts for military and commercial clients such as Mobile Aerospace Engineering.

Buish said current contracts alone warrant the new building, which would house a new piece of machinery for cutting metal. She said she sees further growth should the Northrop Grumman Corp.-EADS contracting team prevail in its bid to build tankers for the U.S. Air Force at Brookley Field Industrial Complex.

Kwantrell Green, owner of Gulfport,

Miss.-based Autumn View Senior Day Services LLC, said he is seeking \$100,000 to \$150,000 to finance expansion of his business into corporate wellness, as well as add room for more clients as the aging population grows. Autumn View has nearly 20 clients, and its employees also perform house calls.

Green said he spoke with two bankers and is optimistic about getting a loan.

Pamela Ramos, interim director of the Alabama Minority Business Enterprise Center, said the center hopes to hold the event annually at least, perhaps even quarterly.

The event was held in partnership with the Minority Business Development Agency, the city of Mobile and the Mobile chamber.

/cut/2/c**JOHN DAVID MERCER/** Staff Photographer From left, A&C Home Lending Inc. owner Dana Henderson-Carthen, Bernadette Jenkins and Hannah Killings talk with financial analyst Debbie Parnell of Alabama Small Business Capital at the University of South Alabama Student Center Ballroom in Mobile on Monday. The women were attending the Gulf Coast Access to Capital Summit, which consisted of one-on-one meetings between minority business owners and lenders.